

**APPARATUS, METHOD, AND SOFTWARE FOR ANALYZING NETWORK
TRAFFIC IN A SERVICE AWARE NETWORK**

Field of the Invention

The present invention generally relates to service aware networks ("SANs"). More specifically, the present invention relates to software that detects and monitors events and sequences of events in a structured and hierarchical manner to enable SAN systems to be easily programmed. In one implementation, the software is capable of translating application layer level events into Internet Protocol ("IP") packet level triggers. The present invention also relates to a method performed by the software and a system that executes the software.

Background of the Invention

In a digital communication network (e.g. a service area network ("SAN")), data packets are transmitted over the network between a source computer (e.g. a personal computer, router, server, etc.) and a destination computer (e.g. a personal computer, router, server, etc.). Also, the transmission of data packets from the source computer to the destination computer is typically referred to as a "downstream" transmission of the data packets, and the transmission of data from the destination computer to the source computer is generally referred to as an "upstream" transmission.

When data packets are transmitted from the source computer to the destination computer (or from the destination computer to the source computer), the data packets typically pass through one or more nodes of the network. Often, a node contains hardware and/or software that analyzes the data packets that have been output from the source computer (or destination computer) and determines a path or channel on which the

data packets are output so that they are routed towards the destination computer (or source computer).

In general, each data packet contains a data packet header, and the node analyzes the data contained in the header to determine how to appropriately route the data packet towards the destination computer (or source computer). Fig. 1 illustrates a typical data packet header HDR, which comprises a source Internet protocol ("IP") address field 100, a destination IP address field 110, a protocol field 120, a source port field 130, and a destination port field 140. The source IP address field 100 contains an IP address that identifies the source computer transmitting the data packet. The destination IP address field 110 contains a destination address that identifies the intended destination computer of the data packet. The protocol field 120 contains protocol data that identifies the data format and/or the transmission format of the data contained in the data packet. The source port field 130 includes data that identifies the computer port that physically outputs the data packet, and the destination port field 140 contains data that represents the computer port that is supposed to input the data packet. By analyzing the data in one or more of the fields 100, 110, 120, 130, and 140 of the header HDR, the node is able to appropriately route the data packet via the appropriate data path or channel.

Each data packet that is transmitted between the source and destination computers (and possibly additional computers) on the network constitutes at least a portion of a particular command or data string. For example, when the source computer sends a command or data string to the destination computer, the command or data string is typically segmented into several data packets, and each of the data packets are separately transmitted over the network. Then, the data packets are reassembled to form the command or data string at the destination computer (or at an intermediate node), and the destination computer (or intermediate node) processes the command or data string.

In addition, each command or data string transmitted between the source and destination computers may constitute at least part of a higher level event that is performed by a specific application. For example, one or more commands may be transmitted from the source computer to the destination computer (or an intermediate node) to indicate that a user at the source computer has lifted a telephone handset connected to the source computer. The lifting of the handset may be an action performed by the user to initiate a video conference call between the source and destination computers (and or other nodes) of the network. In such a scenario, the video conference call may constitute a high level event or application, and the lifting of the handset generates one or more commands that are part of such event. Also, the lifting of the handset itself may constitute a lower level event or application.

In another example, an event may be logging into a server by a user of the source computer. To perform such an event, the user would input a login request to the source computer, and the computer would send one or more commands, which correspond to the login request, to the server. Then, in response to the login request, the server may send one or more responses to the source computer to instruct the source computer to prompt the user to input a username and a corresponding password. Afterwards, the source computer prompts the user to input such information, and when the user inputs a username and password, the source computer generates one or more data strings containing the input information and forwards the one or more data strings to the server. When the server receives the username and password, the server determines if such information is correct. If the username and password are correct, the server generates one or more responses informing the source computer that the login has been successful.

In the above example, the login event is performed by exchanging various commands and data strings between the source computer and the server. Also, each of

the commands and data strings is formed by one or more data packets that are transmitted between the source computer and the server.

One of the main functions of SANs is to handle basic events, such as the events described above, as well as handling more complex applications and events.

- 5 Furthermore, in order to ensure that the various applications transmitted on network are executed at high speeds and have high quality, the SANs must dynamically respond to the specific needs of the various applications as they enter and exit the network and various systems within the network. For example, when a video conference is being performed via the network, the network must ensure that real-time video is transmitted over the
- 10 network so that the end users participating in the conference call view each other with high quality motion video. Moreover, the SAN must ensure that the audio data transmitted over the network is fully synchronized with the video image transmitted over the network. If the audio data is not synchronized with the video image, the end users would see someone speaking but would not hear the spoken words and, at a different
- 15 instance, would here the spoken words but would not see anyone speaking.

Accordingly, when the SAN recognizes that a video conference event is occurring, the SAN should activate various hardware and/or software devices within various nodes of the SAN. When the various devices are activated, they attempt to ensure that real-time video is transmitted during the video conference, that the video image and

20 audio data are synchronized during the video conference, and that other operations are performed during the video conference. Similarly, when the SAN recognizes that other events occur on the network, the SAN should activate the necessary hardware and/or software to ensure that such events are performed with the highest possible quality.

Moreover, the SAN should ideally monitor the activity on the network and predict

25 when the video conference call or other events will occur as soon as possible so that the

SAN can quickly activate the necessary hardware and/or software device. By quickly activating and allocating the various resources needed to perform the event, all of the resources and other components for executing the event will be completely available and ready to perform the event when the event begins or immediately after the event occurs.

5 As a result, the event can be performed at the highest possible quality.

However, most SANs analyze the activity and traffic on the network based on the data packets transmitted across the network. Since the data packets typically form only a part of a command or data string and since the command or data string typically form only part of an event, predicting the higher level event to which the data packets belong is
10 extremely difficult. Thus, the SAN often cannot determine that a particular event is going to occur until immediately before the event occurs. In some cases, the SAN cannot determine that the event is going to occur until after the event is occurring. Thus, in conventional SANs, the quality of many events and applications that are transmitted over the networks is relatively low.

15 As described above, the monitoring devices in conventional SANs analyze the traffic transmitted on the network by analyzing individual data packets. Thus, such monitoring devices typically have been programmed to activate various hardware and/or software devices to perform some simplistic and discrete network functions based on the contents of the data packets. However, such "packet level programming" is extremely
20 complex and difficult. For example, a packet level program that controls the operation of the monitoring devices is not scalable, cannot be easily designed in a robust manner, and is difficult to debug and maintain.

In particular, if programming SAN monitoring devices in the networking environment is compared with convention programming in a non-network environment,
25 programming the monitoring devices at the packet level (up to the third layer of the

communication model) is analogous to programming a non-network computer in machine language. Thus, programming the monitoring devices (and other devices) in a SAN is extremely difficult because higher level programming methods and tools, which are analogous to the programming languages of C and C++, do not exist to describe the various events transmitted over and processed by the SAN. As a result, a programmer can only program the various devices within the SAN by analyzing the individual low level data packets instead of by analyzing the higher level events that are accomplished by transmitting many data packets. In other words, the programmer can only program the SAN devices via a "bottom up" programming approach. Consequently, if the types of data packets exchanged among various computers on the network during a particular event change or if the order in which data packets are exchanged change, the majority of the packet level programming that controls the various devices involved in performing the event must be rewritten. Since several different nodes within the network typically process many types of data packets to perform a single event, when one of the nodes in the SAN needs to be reprogrammed, many other nodes in the network must also be reprogrammed. Due to the large amount of effort required to reprogram many nodes, the conventional monitoring devices within SANs cannot practically be programmed to monitor high level and complex events.

Many examples of conventional programming languages exist that perform certain types of network monitoring and management operations. Such programming languages allow the creation of specific applications based on a plurality of rules and constraints. One example of such languages has been invented by Shwed et al. and is disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 5,835,726 ("the '726 patent"), which is incorporated herein by reference for all purposes. The language described in the '726 patent was designed to improve the security of networks but only teaches a packet-by-packet analysis of the

process flow. Thus, the '726 patent does not address analyzing a flow of data packets within a process flow at the data packet level and does not address analyzing and processing multiple process flows and higher events defined in the process flows.

In addition, other monitoring and processing devices within SANs are specifically
5 programmed to efficiently route the data packets corresponding to a specific application. However, presently and especially in the near future, SANs will require more sophisticated ways to handle, manage, and transport packets over the network. For example, they will require the ability to manage not only a specific application but also to manage the interaction between applications as the applications are transported
10 throughout the network. This type of management requires new types of programming methods, tools, and scripting languages that enable SAN devices perform complex operations beyond efficiently routing the data packets of a specific application.

As described above, the conventional programming techniques enable a
programmer to program a SAN device to analyze the traffic on the SAN. However, such
15 techniques require a "bottom up" programming approach in which the programmer must specify packet-by-packet rules and constraints. Such programming techniques ultimately develop programs and scripts that are not scalable since most network protocols utilize technologies that enable them to ignore the actual packetization of the data transmitted on the network. Thus, for the reasons presented above, creating a program that applies
20 packet-by-packet decisions to application level logic based on the conventional programming techniques is unfeasible.

Accordingly, a substantial need exists for a programming method or tool that enables high level events to be defined hierarchically such that complex, high level events can be defined based on simpler, lower level events. In addition, the programming
25 method or tool should allow the programmer to fully define the parallel processing that

may occur within the definition of events and define the network protocol and specific messages (including their structure and transfer mechanisms) that are used in executing events. Also, the programming method or tool should enable the monitoring device (or other device) to search for the network protocol and specific messages in a stream of data packets that constitute a network process flow. Moreover, the programming method or tool should enable the programmer to program the monitoring device (or other device) without requiring the programmer to analyze individual packets to create a program that makes packet-by-packet decisions. In other words, the programming device or tool should enable the programmer to program the SAN devices via a “top down” programming approach.

If a higher level programming language was available to program SAN devices to monitor or manage data on an event-by-event basis, robust and scalable programs could be developed relatively easily. In addition, if the types of data packets exchanged among various computers on the network during a particular event change or if the order in which data packets are exchanged change, the programs would not have to be substantially modified. Specifically, if the programs are written at the “event” level instead of the “data packet” level, only the compiler that compiles the programming language would need to be changed so that the data packets are processed in the correct manner.

Summary of the Invention

In an illustrative example, a method for controlling a network system is provided which comprises: (a) defining a first event that occurs in said network system, wherein said event is defined via software; and (b) controlling at least a portion of said network system based on said first event.

In another illustrative example, a method for controlling a network system is provided which comprises: (a) defining a matching operation that occurs in said network system, wherein said matching operation is defined via software and detects an occurrence corresponding to information transmitted over said network system, and
5 wherein said occurrence is identified in said matching operation; and (b) controlling at least a portion of said network system based on said matching operation.

In yet another illustrative example, a method for controlling a network system is provided which comprises: (a) defining a concurrent operation, wherein said concurrent operation comprises a first group of operations comprising at least a first operation and a
10 second operation that are concurrently performed; and (b) controlling at least a portion of said network system based on said concurrent operation.

In a further illustrative example, a method for controlling a network system is provided which comprises: (a) defining a first throw operation, wherein said first throw operation identifies resynchronization operation corresponding to said first throw
15 operation, and wherein said first throw operation causes a specific operation corresponding to said resynchronization operation to be performed; and (b) controlling at least a portion of said network system based on said first throw operation and said resynchronization operation.

In a still further illustrative example, an apparatus for controlling a network
20 system is provided which comprises: an interface coupled to a network of said network system; and a processor that processes a first event that occurs in said network system, wherein said first event is defined via software and wherein said processor controls at least a portion of said network system when said first event is processed.

In an even further illustrative example, an apparatus for controlling a network
25 system is provided which comprises: an interface coupled to a network of said network

system; and a processor that processes a matching operation that occurs in said network system, wherein said matching operation is defined via software and instructs said processor to detect an occurrence corresponding to information transmitted over said network system, wherein said occurrence is identified in said matching operation, and
5 wherein said processor controls at least a portion of said network system based on said matching operation.

In an additional illustrative example, an apparatus for controlling a network system is provided which comprises: an interface coupled to a network of said network system; and a processor that processes a concurrent operation, wherein said concurrent
10 operation comprises a first group of operations comprising at least a first operation and a second operation that are concurrently processed by said processor, and wherein said processor controls at least a portion of said network system based on said concurrent operation.

In yet another illustrative example, an apparatus for controlling a network system
15 is provided which comprises: an interface coupled to a network of said network system; and a processor that performs a first throw operation, wherein said first throw operation identifies resynchronization operation corresponding to said first throw operation, wherein said first throw operation causes said processor to perform a specific operation corresponding to said resynchronization operation, and wherein said processor controls at
20 least a portion of said network system based on said first throw operation and said resynchronization operation.

In an additional illustrative example, a software program contained in a computer readable medium containing instructions for causing a processor to perform a routine is provided which comprises: (a) defining a first event that occurs in said network system,
25 wherein said event is defined via software; and (b) controlling at least a portion of said

network system based on said first event.

In still an additional illustrative example, a software program contained in a computer readable medium containing instructions for causing a processor to perform a routine is provided which comprises: (a) defining a matching operation that occurs in said network system, wherein said matching operation is defined via software and detects an occurrence corresponding to information transmitted over said network system, and wherein said occurrence is identified in said matching operation; and (b) controlling at least a portion of said network system based on said matching operation.

In an even further illustrative example, a software program contained in a computer readable medium containing instructions for causing a processor to perform a routine is provided which comprises: (a) defining a concurrent operation, wherein said concurrent operation comprises a first group of operations comprising at least a first operation and a second operation that are concurrently performed; and (b) controlling at least a portion of said network system based on said concurrent operation.

In another illustrative example, a software program contained in a computer readable medium containing instructions for causing a processor to perform a routine is provided which comprises: (a) defining a first throw operation, wherein said first throw operation identifies resynchronization operation corresponding to said first throw operation, and wherein said first throw operation causes a specific operation corresponding to said resynchronization operation to be performed, (b) controlling at least a portion of said network system based on said first throw operation and said resynchronization operation.

In still another illustrative example, a development system for creating an application program is provided which comprises: a computer readable medium containing a software program having instructions; and a compiler that compiles said

instructions into network triggers for a network processor, wherein said software program contains instructions to perform a routine, comprising: (a) defining a first event that occurs in said network system, wherein said event is defined via software; and (b) controlling at least a portion of said network system based on said first event.

5 In an even further illustrative example, a development system for creating an application program is provided which comprises: a computer readable medium containing software having instructions; and a compiler that compiles said instructions into network triggers for a network processor, wherein said software program contains instructions to perform a routine, comprising: (a) defining a matching operation that
10 occurs in said network system, wherein said matching operation is defined via software and detects an occurrence corresponding to information transmitted over said network system, and wherein said occurrence is identified in said matching operation; and (b) controlling at least a portion of said network system based on said matching operation.

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15 application program is provided which comprises: a computer readable medium containing software having instructions; and a compiler that compiles said instructions into network triggers for a network processor, wherein said software program contains instructions to perform a routine, comprising: (a) defining a concurrent operation, wherein said concurrent operation comprises a first group of operations comprising at
20 least a first operation and a second operation that are concurrently performed; and (b) controlling at least a portion of said network system based on said concurrent operation.

In a further illustrative example, a development system for creating an application program is provided which comprises: a computer readable medium containing software having instructions; and a compiler that compiles said instructions into network triggers
25 for a network processor, wherein said software program contains instructions to perform a

routine, comprising: (a) defining a first throw operation, wherein said first throw operation identifies resynchronization operation corresponding to said first throw operation, and wherein said first throw operation causes a specific operation corresponding to said resynchronization operation to be performed, (b) controlling at least
5 a portion of said network system based on said first throw operation and said resynchronization operation.

Brief Description of the Drawings

The above and other objects and advantages of the present invention will become
10 more apparent by describing in detail preferred embodiments thereof with reference to the attached drawings in which:

Fig. 1 illustrates a non-limiting example of the format of a header of a data packet;

Fig. 2 illustrates a non-limiting example of the structure of a network monitoring and classifying ("NMC") system according to an embodiment of the present invention;

15 Fig. 3 illustrates a non-limiting example of the structure of a compiler according to an embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 4 illustrates a non-limiting example a routine performed by the compiler illustrated in Fig. 3;

Fig. 5 illustrates a non-limiting example of layers of a communication model;

20 Fig. 6 illustrates a non-limiting example of a state machine for a logon procedure;

Fig. 7 illustrates a non-limiting example of a software program that is executed by the NMC system shown in Fig. 2 for monitoring a logon procedure;

Fig. 8 illustrates a non-limiting example of a flow chart of the software program shown in Fig. 7;

25 Fig. 9 illustrates another non-limiting example of a software program that is

executed by the NMC system shown in Fig. 2 for monitoring a logon procedure;

Fig. 10 illustrates a non-limiting example of a flow chart of the software program shown in Fig. 9;

Fig. 11 illustrates a non-limiting example of a software instruction that analyzes
5 data transmitted over a network in the Internet protocol ("IP") layer of the communication model shown in Fig. 5;

Fig. 12 illustrates another non-limiting example of a software instruction that analyzes data transmitted over a network in the IP layer of the communication model shown in Fig. 5;

10 Fig. 13 illustrates a non-limiting example of a software instruction that analyzes data transmitted over a network in the transport communication protocol ("TCP") layer of the communication model shown in Fig. 5;

Fig. 14 illustrates a non-limiting example of a software program that is executed by the NMC system shown in Fig. 2 that imposes a constraint on a variable;

15 Fig. 15 illustrates a non-limiting example of a software program that is executed by the NMC system shown in Fig. 2 that executes instructions relating to a timer;

Fig. 16 illustrates a non-limiting example of a software program that is executed by the NMC system shown in Fig. 2 that executes instructions relating to a meter;

Fig. 17 illustrates a non-limiting example of a software program that is executed
20 by the NMC system shown in Fig. 2 that determines whether or not to increase the bandwidth of a data stream;

Fig. 18 illustrates a non-limiting example of a software program that is executed by the NMC system shown in Fig. 2 that executes a mergeFlow instruction; and

Fig. 19 illustrates a non-limiting example of a software program that is executed
25 by the NMC system shown in Fig. 2 that executes throw and resync instructions.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

The following description of the preferred embodiments discloses specific configurations, features, and processes. However, the preferred embodiments are merely
5 examples of the present invention, and thus, the specific features described below are merely used to more easily describe such embodiments and to provide an overall understanding of the present invention. Accordingly, one skilled in the art will readily recognize that the present invention is not limited to the specific embodiments described below. Furthermore, the descriptions of various configurations, features, and processes of
10 the present invention that would have been known to one skilled in the art are omitted for the sake of clarity and brevity.

In addition, the embodiments described below contain illustrative examples of software programs. Such programs may be contained in a read only memory ("ROM"), a random access memory ("RAM"), a floppy disk, a hard disk, an optical disk, a carrier
15 wave (e.g. a carrier wave transmitted via the Internet, a vertical blanking interval of a television signal, etc.), or any other computer readable medium. Moreover, some of the software programs may be implemented entirely via software or a combination of hardware and software. Alternatively, some of the routines may be implemented entirely in hardware.

20 in one non-limiting aspect, the present invention relates to software that detects and monitors events and sequences of events in a structured and hierarchical manner to enable service area network ("SAN") systems to be easily programmed. Other non-limiting aspects of the present invention relate to a method performed by the software and a system that executes the software.

25 In one implementation of the present invention, the programming language is used

to program a network monitoring and classifying (“NMC”) system for processing streams of data packets belonging to one or more process flows. An illustrative, non-limiting embodiment of the system 200 is shown in Fig. 2 and comprises a central control unit (“CCU 205”) and a plurality of packet processors PP1 to PPN. The packet processors

5 PP1 to PPN are commonly referred to as network processors. Also, the CCU 205 comprises physical access units 210 and 220, data path units 230 and 240, a header processor 250, and a classifying unit 260.

The physical access unit 210 inputs data packets travelling upstream from one node to another node of the network, and the remaining components 230, 250, and 260 of

10 the CCU 205 analyze the upstream data packets and determine the process flows that respectively correspond to the data packets. Then, the CCU 205 outputs the upstream data packets to the packet processors PP1 to PPN based on their respective process flows.

The physical access unit 220 is similar to the physical access unit 220 except that it inputs data packets travelling downstream from one node to another node of the

15 network. Then, the remaining components 240, 250, and 260 of the CCU 205 analyze the downstream data packets and determine the process flows that respectively correspond to the data packets. Afterwards, the CCU 205 outputs the downstream data packets to the packet processors PP1 to PPN based on their respective process flows.

A more detailed description of the operation of the NMC system 200 is contained in U.S. Application No. 09/541,598 (“the ‘598 application”) and in U.S. Application No. 09/606,214 (“the ‘214 application”). The ‘598 application is entitled “Apparatus and Method for Wire-Speed Classification and Pre-Processing of Data Packets in a Full Duplex Network”. Also, the ‘598 application was filed on April 3, 2000, invented by Michael Ben-Nun, Sagi Ravid, and Offer Weil, and assigned to the assignee of the present application. The ‘214 application is entitled “Method and Apparatus for Scalable

Process Flow Load Balancing of a Multiplicity of Parallel Packet Processors in a Digital Communication Network". Also, the '214 application was filed on June 29, 2000, invented by Michael Ben-Nun, Itzhak Barak, Sagi Ravid, and Offer Weil, and assigned to the assignee of the present application. Both the '598 and '214 applications are incorporated herein by reference for all purposes.

As described in the '598 and '214 applications, the each of the packet processors PP1 to PPN process data packets corresponding to a particular flow. Furthermore, each of the processors PP1 to PPN can be programmed in accordance with the software and method of the present invention described below. However, the software and method can
5 clearly be utilized in many other types of network components and are not limited to being used only in the processors PP1 and PPN.

In any event, by utilizing the software described below, each packet processor PP1 to PPN can be programmed to detect the occurrence of an event or events that are defined by: (1) data contained in a single data packet or datagram, (2) data contained in a stream
10 of data packets or datagrams within a process flow, (3) data contained within a plurality of streams of data packets or datagrams within a process flow, and/or (4) data contained within multiple streams of data packets or datagrams contained in multiple process flows. In addition, an event may be defined by information conveyed in any one of the seven layers of the seven-layer communication model. When one of the packet processors PP1
15 to PPN (e.g. the processor PP1) detects the occurrence of a particular event, the processor PP1 performs a predefined action. For example, the processor PP1 may output control signals to other nodes of the network to instruct such nodes to prepare to handle particular aspects of the event.

The manner in which the processor PP1 detects events and the predefined actions
20 that the processor PP1 performs upon detecting one or more of the events is determined

by a program created by a programmer via the software of the present invention. In one implementation, the software (as described in more detail below) is an application level programming language, and the application level program created by the software is compiled by a compiler to generate a lower level program (e.g. an assembly level program). Then, the assembly level program is supplied to the processor PP1 and controls the operation of the process.

An example of a compiler that may be used to compile the application level programming language is illustrated in Fig. 3. As shown in the figure, the compiler comprises a packet level trigger ("PLT") compiler 300 which inputs application level constraints 310, abstract syntax notation 320, transfer syntax encoding 330, and message sequence information 340.

The transfer syntax encoding 330 describes the type of data that is processed by the packet processor PP1. Specifically, the transfer syntax encoding 330 contains information that describes what type of data is being supplied to the compiler 300, and the compiler 300 utilizes such information to correctly generate the required code. For example, the transfer syntax encoding 330 may indicate that the data contains strings (e.g. a stream of characters) or constants (e.g. numerical values).

The abstract syntax notation 320 describes the structure of the transfer syntax encoding 330. For example, the notation 320 may indicate that a standard encoding rule is used to encode the data packets that are being transmitted over the network and monitored by the processor PP1. For instance, the abstract syntax notation 320 may identify the overall structure of the encoding rules used in high level encoding and transfer protocols, such as the H.323 protocol. Examples of standard encoding rules include (but are not limited to) the basic encoding rules ("BER"), packet encoding rules ("PER"), and canonical encoding rules ("CER").

The message sequence information 340 indicates the manner in which a source computer (e.g. a client) and a destination computer (e.g. a server) interact to establish a communication channel between each other. In addition, the information 340 indicates the manner in which information is transferred between the source and destination

5 computers after the communication channel is established. For example, in a network that utilizes the file transfer protocol (“FTP”), the source computer sends a request to the destination computer to establish a communication channel to transfer one or more data packets. After receiving the request, the destination computer generates and sends a confirmation to the source computer. The confirmation establishes a communication
10 channel (or process flow) between the source and destination computer by identifying the source and destination ports of the destination computer that will be used during the transfer of data packets. Subsequently, data packets are transferred between the source and destination computers. After all of the data packets have been transmitted, the source (or destination) computer sends an end of FTP sequence command to the destination (or
15 source) computer to indicate that the transfer of data packets is complete. In such a scenario, the message sequence information 340 would inform the compiler 300 that the computers on the network transfer data in accordance with the FTP protocol.

As described above, the abstract syntax notation 320, transfer syntax encoding 330, and message sequence information 340 indicate that the network operates in
20 accordance with standard syntax notation, syntax encoding, and message sequencing. However, the syntax notation 320, syntax encoding 330, and/or sequence information 340 may identify user defined syntax notations, syntax encoding, and message sequencing. For example, the abstract syntax notation 320 may indicate that proprietary encoding rules or proprietary transfer rules are used to encode the data packets. Upon reading the
25 specification, one skilled in the art would understand how to develop proprietary

encoding or transfer rules and generate the appropriate abstract syntax notation 320 to supply to the PLT compiler 300. Furthermore, one skilled in the art would understand how to develop user defined syntax encoding and message sequencing and generate the appropriate syntax encoding 330 and sequence information 340.

5 The application level constraints 310 are also input to the PLT compiler 300 and correspond the higher level program that is defined by a programmer. Such constraints are defined based on which network events need to be identified and may correspond to a constraint of any layer of the seven-layer communication model from the IP communication model layer (i.e. layer 3) to the application layer (i.e. layer 7). A detailed
10 description of some examples of application level constraints will be described below.

After receiving such inputs 310, 320, 330, and 340, the PLT compiler 300 processes the inputs 310, 320, 330, and 340 and generates packet level triggers and actions 350. The packet level triggers and actions 350 correspond to the lower level programming code that is executed by the packet processor PP1.

15 In one implementation, the PLT compiler 300 may be located with the packet processor PP1. Alternatively, the compiler 300 may be located remotely from the processor PP1 and may even be located remotely from the NMC system 200 shown in Fig. 2. Also, although the description and below generally focuses on the interaction between the compiler 300 and the packet processor PP1, the compiler 300 interacts with
20 the other processors PP2 to PPN in a similar manner. Alternatively, a plurality of compilers may interact with the processors PP1 to PPN.

In light of the disclosure in the present application, one skilled in the art clearly will know how to develop a PLT compiler 300. Also, a further description of how to develop a compiler is contained in Aho et al., Compilers – Principles, Techniques, and
25 Tools, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, March 1988 (reprint) (“the Aho

reference”). Chapter 11 of the Aho reference, entitled “Want to Write a Compiler,” and Chapter 12 of the reference, entitled “A Look at Some Compilers,” provide basic information for the development of a compiler.

In Chapter 12, Section 12.3, of the Aho reference, the authors provide an example of the operation of a C compiler. An illustrative example of the operation of the PLT compiler 300 shown in Fig. 3 may be based on Chapter 12 of the Aho reference and will be described below in conjunction with Fig. 4.

As shown in the figure, the source code generated by a programmer is input by the PLT compiler 300 (operation 400), and the compiler 300 performs lexical and syntactical analysis on the source code (operation 405). Based on such analysis, the compiler 300 determines if the source code is valid (operation 410). If the code is not valid, the compiler 300 generates various lexical and syntactical error lists (operation 415). These lists may include information about lexical and syntactical errors as well as pointers to the errors.

On the other hand, if the source code is valid, the compiler 300 generates an intermediate code (operation 420). The intermediate code may be a combination of either postfix or prefix notation for the expressions used in an assembly code. Also, at this stage, the compiler 300 allocates local memory to store various information and variables that are accessed later in the compiling process. Then, the compiler 300 analyzes the intermediate code to generate the preliminary assembly language code (operation 425). In particular, the expressions of the intermediate code are evaluated to form a syntax tree, and the syntax tree uniquely identifies the specific expressions of the assembly language code. Thus, the compiler 300 can easily translate the syntax tree into the preliminary assembly language code based on the specific architecture of the processor (e.g. the packet processor PP1) that will execute the code.

After the preliminary assembly language code is generated, the code is optimized by evaluating various parameters of the packet processor PP1, such as speed or memory size. The optimized code constitutes the final assembly language code that is designed to run on the packet processor PP1 (operation 430).

5 Although the description above describes specific operations of the PLT compiler 300, the present invention is not limited to such a description. For example, one skilled in the art would clearly understand how to develop additional routines to create a simpler or more complex PLT compiler 300.

As previously indicated, the application level constraints 310 that are input to the
10 compiler 300 are determined based on a software program that is created via a software programming language. According to an illustrative embodiment of the invention, the software programming language enables a programmer to create a software program that defines various "events" that occur as a result of the transfer of data and which are detectable in a SAN system. The programming language is extremely flexible and
15 enables the programmer to define events that occur at any level within the hierarchy of the seven layers of the communication model shown in Fig. 5. Furthermore, the present invention is clearly not limited to the specific communication model shown in Fig. 5 and can be used in conjunction with virtually any other communication model.

The software described above enables the programmer to identify basic events,
20 such as identifying the fact that a certain sequence of data was contained within a packet that was transmitted between the source computer and the destination computer. On the other hand, the language enables the programmer to identify more complex events, such as identifying that a user has used the source computer to establish a telephone call. After the events are defined, the programmer can identify the action or actions that need to be
25 performed when an event occurs. As a result, the packet processors PP1 to PPN can be

simply and easily programmed to identify basic, intermediate, and complex events and performs various actions and/or generate certain control signals upon the occurrence of such events.

Specific, non-limiting examples of routines that are created by the programming languages will be described below. However, examples of some of the basic formats of the software and some examples of the various commands, instructions, modifiers, etc. of the software will be described first.

In one implementation, the software programming language is formed of a hierarchical arrangement of **events**, and each **event** can correspond to an occurrence or action that transpires in any of the layers of the communication model shown in Fig. 5, starting with the IP layer (i.e. the third layer) upwards. Each event is designated with a unique event name and may be defined by one or more instructions. For example, as shown below, an **event** having the event name "First_Event" is defined based on "n" instructions (i.e. Instruction 1 to Instruction n).

```
event First_Event ( ) {  
    Instruction 1;  
    Instruction 2;  
    Instruction 3;  
    ...  
    Instruction n;  
}
```

Depending on the nature of Instruction 1 to Instruction n, the **event** is deemed to have occurred when one, more than one, or all of the instructions are satisfied or have been executed.

One instruction that can be used in an **event** is a definition of a local variable or a local constant to be utilized in the **event**. An example of such an **event** is shown below:

```

event First_Event ( ) {
    Instruction 1;
    Local1 = 5
    Instruction 3;
5      ...

    Instruction n;
}

```

- 10 As indicated above, the second instruction of the **event** First_Event() sets the local constant Local1 equal to five.

Another instruction that may be used in an **event** is the **alias** instruction. An **alias** instruction is used to assign an alias name to a variable (or constant or a subfield of the variable or constant). When a particular event assigns an alias name to a variable, other

15 events can utilize the variable by referring to the alias name, within its scope of definition. An illustrative example of the format of an **alias** instruction is as follows:

alias <alias name> = <variable name>.

- 20 For example, in the **event** First_Event () described above, an **alias** instruction can assign the constant Local1 with the alias name “reference1” as illustrated below:

```

event First_Event ( ) {
    Instruction 1;
    Local1 = 5
25    alias reference1 = Local1
    ...

    Instruction n;
30 }

```

Once an alias name is created for a first variable (or constant or a subfield of the variable or constant) within a particular **event**, another **event** can set a second variable (or constant

or a subfield of the variable or constant) equal to the first variable by referring to the alias name of the of the first variable and the name of the **event** that defined the first variable, provided that the first alias is within the scope of the second event. An example of the format of an instruction for setting the second variable (of a second **event**) equal to the
5 first variable (of the first **event**) is as follows:

<second variable name> = <first event name>.<alias name>

An example of an **event** `Second_Event ()` which sets a constant "Local2" equal to the
10 constant "Local1" in the **event** `First_Event ()` is illustrated below:

```
event Second_Event ( ) {  
    Instruction 1;  
    Local2 = First_Event.reference1;  
    ...  
15    Instruction m;  
}
```

According to the definition of the constant Local2 in the **event** `Second_Event ()`, the value of the constant Local2 equals the value of the alias reference1 (i.e. the constant
20 Local1), as defined in **event** `First_Event ()`.

Examples of other instructions that can be used to define events include (but are not limited to) the **match** instruction, the **concurrent** instruction, the **otherwise** instruction, the **success** instruction, and the **fail** instruction. Furthermore, such instructions may be implemented via software, hardware, or a combination of software
25 and hardware.

The **match** instruction is an instruction that performs a pattern recognition operation. For example, it can be used to determine if a particular string is contained in a packet, if a specific traffic pattern or information exists in any of the levels of the seven-

level communication model, and/or if a particular traffic pattern exists in some application data type (“ADT”) such as an ADT defined by the International Telecommunications Union’s (X.680-X.683) ASN.1 standard. Furthermore, a programmer may create additional proprietary pattern recognition elements by using an abstract syntax or transfer notation.

The **match** instruction is defined based on various modifiers and constraints. For instance, an illustrative, non-limiting example of the basic format of the **match** instruction is as follows:

match [<modifier 1>, <modifier 2>, etc.](<constraint 1>, <constraint 2>, etc.)

In one implementation, the modifiers identify the type of data, information, or traffic pattern that is subjected to the **match** instruction, and the constraints identify specific values or formats of such data, information, or traffic pattern. Some examples of modifiers that may be used to create a **match** instruction include (but are not limited to) the var modifier, the event modifier, the immediate modifier, the flow modifier, the at modifier, the offset modifier, the length modifier, and the dir modifier.

The var modifier identifies a variable that is to be matched by the **match** instruction. The variable may be a variable that is predefined elsewhere in the software program. For example, the variable may identify a type of data that is included in a data packet, a type of information that is included in any one of the seven layers of the communication model, or a type of traffic pattern in one or more process flows. On the other hand, the variable may identify a predefined location within a data packet, datagram, data stream, or layer in the communication model. An example of the format

of a **match** instruction that uses the var modifier is illustrated below:

```
5      match [var=var1]( )  
      {  
          specific operation  
      }
```

As defined above, the **match** instruction determines when a variable var1 exists.

Specifically, in the straight-bracketed term, the var modifier indicates that the **match**

10 instruction should perform a matching operation based on the variable var1. If the packet processor PP1 is executing the **match** instruction and the variable var1 is defined as a type of data that is included in a data packet, the **match** instruction will instruct the processor PP1 to examine data packets and determine if the var1 type of data exists in one of the data packets. On the other hand, if the variable var1 is defined as a type of

15 information that is included in a particular layer of the communication model, the **match** instruction will instruct the processor PP1 to examine information contained in the particular layer and determine if the var1 type of information exists. Furthermore, if the variable var1 is defined as a type of traffic pattern in a process flow, the **match** instruction will instruct the processor PP1 to examine the traffic patterns in the process

20 flow to determine if the particular type of traffic pattern exists. In addition, if the variable var1 is defined in some alternative manner, the **match** instruction will instruct the processor PP1 to perform a matching operation in accordance with the manner in which the variable var1 is defined.

Also, as noted in the **match** instruction above, the parenthetical term does not

25 include any constraints. Therefore, in a non-limiting implementation, the packet processor PP1 deems the **match** instruction to be satisfied as long as the variable var1 is detected, regardless of the specific value or format of the variable var1. When the **match**

instruction is satisfied, the processor PP1 performs a “*specific operation*” defined within the curved-bracketed term. By using the var modifier to identify the particular variable var1 to be matched via the **match** instruction, the processor PP1 only needs to examine data from the relevant portions of the data packets, communication model, or process flow(s) to determine if a match exists. Thus, the processor PP1 does not unnecessarily waste time and utilize precious resources evaluating all of the information supplied to the processor PP1.

An example of a **match** instructions that contains a constraint is illustrated below:

```

10      match[var=var1](var1=0) {
        specific operation
        }
15

```

In the example above, the **match** instruction is satisfied when the variable var1 exists and the variable var1 equals zero. Specifically, in the straight-bracketed term, the var modifier indicates that the **match** instruction should perform a matching operation based on the variable var1. Also, the parenthetical term within the **match** instruction indicates that the **match** instruction is satisfied when the variable var1 equals zero. Accordingly, in one implementation, the **match** instruction illustrated above instructs a packet processor (e.g. the processor PP1) to examine the data transmitted over the network, extract the fields from the data stream that correspond to the variable var1, and determine if the variable var1 equals zero. When these conditions are met, the processor PP1 performs a “*specific operation*” defined within the curved-bracketed term.

The event modifier is similar to the var modifier, except that it causes the **match** instruction to determine if a predefined event has occurred rather than if a certain variable exists. For example, if the event First_Event () has already been defined in the program,

the programmer can create the following **match** instruction that determines if such event has occurred:

```
5      match[event=First_Event( )] {  
        specific operation  
      }
```

- 10 In the straight-bracketed term, the event modifier indicates that the **match** instruction should be determined when the **event** First_Event has occurred. When such event occurs, a processor (e.g. the processor PP1) is then instructed to perform a “*specific operation*” defined within the curved-bracketed term.

By providing a **match** instruction that instructs the packet processor PP1 to identify whether or not a particular event has occurred, more complex events can be defined based on less complex events that have already been predefined within the software program. For example, after the **event** First_Event () has been defined, a programmer can program the following event:

```
20      Event Second_Event {  
        Instruction 1;  
  
        match[event=First_Event( )] {  
25          specific operation  
        }  
  
        Instruction 3;  
        ...  
30      Instruction m;  
    }
```

- As shown above, the **event** Second_Event contains m instructions. The first and third to
35 mth instructions respectively are Instruction 1 and Instructions 3 to m, and the second

instruction is the **match** instruction described previously. In this specific example, the **event** Second_Event () is deemed to have occurred if the Instruction 1 and Instruction 3 are satisfied and if the **match** instruction is satisfied (i.e. if the **event** First_Event () has occurred). By enabling the programmer to hierarchically define complex events based on simpler predefined events, the software program of the present embodiment provides a power and flexible tool that enables the programmer to quickly and easily program various SAN systems. Moreover, it allows for straightforward re-usability of software products previously programmed for SAN systems.

The immediate modifier is used in conjunction with the var modifier and defines the datagrams in which the **match** instruction is to search for the variable defined by the var modifier. In one example, a datagram is a concatenation of the payloads of a process flow. If the immediate modifier is “on”, the **match** instruction will search for the variable identified by the var modifier only in the current datagram. In one example, the current datagram is the datagram in which the variable identified by the var modifier first occurs. On the other hand, if the immediate modifier is “off”, the **match** instruction will search for the variable identified by the var modifier in all datagrams until a match is actually found.

For instance, a particular event that occurs on the network may initiate certain process flows between a source computer and a destination computer. In addition, various types of datagrams are transmitted between the source and destination computers via the process flows. If a **match** instruction searches for a particular value of a particular type of datagram in the process flows and if the immediate modifier is “on”, the **match** instruction will search for the particular value only in the first datagram which is encountered and which is the particular type of datagram. On the other hand, if the immediate modifier is “off”, the **match** instruction will search for the particular value in

all of the datagrams that are the particular type of datagram until the **match** instruction is satisfied or until the certain process flows are terminated. In the above example, the datagram in which the **match** instruction searches for the variable could be a data packet transmitted over the network or a higher level datagram.

5 An example of a **match** instruction that uses the immediate modifier is illustrated below:

```
10           match[var=var1, immediate=on](var1=0) {  
              specific operation  
              }
```

15 In the example described above, the var modifier in the straight-bracketed term indicates that a processor (e.g. the packet processor PP1) should perform a matching operation based on the variable var1, and the parenthetical term indicates that the **match** instruction is satisfied when the variable var1 equals zero. In addition, the immediate modifier instructs the **match** instruction to determine if the variable var1 equals zero for only the current datagram and not for the subsequent datagrams. If the variable var1
20 equals zero within the current datagram, the packet processor PP1 performs the “*specific operation*” defined within the curved-bracketed term.

The flow modifier is used to identify a specific process flow to which the **match** instruction should be applied. An example of a **match** instruction that uses the flow modifier is illustrated below.

```
25           match[var=var1, flow=processflow1](var1=0) {  
              specific operation  
30           }
```

The above **match** instruction instructs the processor PP1 to search for the var1 and determine if the variable var1 equals zero. Also, the flow modifier contained in the straight-bracketed term instructs the processor PP1 to only search for the variable in data
5 belonging to the process flow “processflow1”. In the present example, the term “processflow1” is a variable that is previously defined and identifies a particular process flow of data packets which are travelling over the network. If the processor PP1 determines that a data packet within the process flow processflow1 contains a variable var1 that equals zero, the processor PP1 performs the “*specific operation*” defined within
10 the curved-bracketed term. In another implementation, the flow modifier will instruct the packet processor PP1 to perform the **match** operation over all process flows, only if the process flow defined by the variable processflow1 is detected.

The at modifier is used in a **match** instruction to define the location within a data packet (or other type of datagram) that needs to be evaluated. In one example, predefined
15 keywords correspond to specific locations within a data packet (or other type of datagram), and the at modifier identifies one of the predefined keywords. Some examples of predefined keywords include (but are not limited to) the “ip” keyword, the “payload” keyword, and the “transport” keyword. The ip keyword identifies the starting offset of the IP header in the data packet (or other type of datagram). The payload keyword
20 identifies the starting offset of the payload header in the current data packet (or other type of datagram). The transport keyword identifies the starting offset of the transport header in the data packet (or other type of datagram). The predefined keywords may be defined by the programmer or may be predefined in the software language. An example of a **match** instruction that uses the at modifier and the ip keyword is illustrated below.


```

5      match[var=var1, at=ip](var1=0) {
        specific operation
      }

```

The above **match** instruction instructs the processor PP1 to search for the var1 and determine if the variable var1 equals zero. Also, the at modifier contained in the straight-bracketed term instructs the processor PP1 to only search for the variable in the IP header in the data packet. If the processor PP1 determines that the variable var1 equals zero in the IP header of the data packet, it performs the “*specific operation*” defined within the curved-bracketed term.

The offset modifier is used to precisely define a location within a data packet, datagram, process flow, etc. where the packet processor PP1 should initiate a match operation. If the offset modifier is used in conjunction with an at modifier, the offset is calculated from the beginning of the location identified by the at modifier. On the other hand, if the offset modifier is not used in conjunction with an at modifier, the offset is calculated from the beginning of the data packet, datagram, process flow, etc., as the case may require.

An example of a **match** instruction that utilizes an offset modifier is shown below:

```

25      match[var=var1, at=datastream, offset=4]() {
        specific operation
      }

```

In the above example, the variable “datastream” has been previously defined as a specific stream of data corresponding to a particular process flow. As a result, the above **match**

instruction instructs a processor (e.g. the processor PP1) to search for the variable var1.

Furthermore, the at modifier instructs the processor PP1 to search for the variable var1

within the particular data stream identified by the variable datastream. Finally, the offset

modifier instructs the processor PP1 to begin searching at an offset of four bytes from the

5 first payload of the particular data stream. If the processor PP1 finds the variable var1 at

the location defined by the at and offset modifiers, it performs the “*specific operation*”

defined within the curved-bracketed term.

The length modifier informs the processor PP1 how many units of information it

is instructed to examine when it performs the **match** instruction. An example of a **match**

10 instruction that utilizes a length modifier is shown below:

```
match[var=var1, at=datastream, offset=4, length=1000]() {
```

```
    specific operation
```

15

```
}
```

In such example, the **match** instruction instructs a processor (e.g. the processor PP1) to

search for the variable var1 within the particular data stream identified by the variable

datastream. Furthermore, the processor PP1 is instructed to begin searching at an offset

20 of four bytes from the first payload of the particular data stream. In addition, the length

modifier instructs the processor PP1 to search for the variable var1 by examining only the

1000 bytes from the location identified by the offset and at modifiers. If the variable var1

is found at the location defined by the at, offset, and length modifiers, it performs the

“*specific operation*” defined within the curved-bracketed term.

25 As noted above, the magnitude of the offset and length modifiers is measured in

bytes. However, the present invention is not limited to such a measurement, and virtually

any unit of measure can be employed.

The dir modifier instructs a processor (e.g. the processor PP1) to perform the match operation on information travelling in a particular direction. In one example, the dir modifier is set equal to the character ">" if the processor PP1 is to perform the match operation on information travelling downstream from a source computer (e.g. an initiating computer) to a destination computer (e.g. an addressee computer). On the other hand, the dir modifier is set equal to the character "<" if the match operation is to be performed on information travelling upstream from the destination computer (e.g. the addressee computer) to the source computer (e.g. the initiating computer).

An example of a **match** instruction that utilizes a dir modifier is shown below:

```
10      match[var=var1, at=datastream, offset=4, length=1000, dir=>]() {  
        specific operation  
15      }
```

The above example is similar to the example discussed previously, except that the processor PP1 searches for the variable var1 within the particular data stream travelling downstream from a source computer to a destination computer.

In addition to the **match** instruction, a **concurrent** instruction is another instruction that can be used to define an event. The **concurrent** instruction contains a plurality of "sub-instructions" and specifies that all of the "sub-instructions" will be concurrently executed until one of the instructions is successfully completed. When the one sub-instruction is successfully completed, all other sub-instructions within the **concurrent** instruction are terminated. Furthermore, a **concurrent** instruction is not satisfied when all of the sub-instructions fail. An example of a **concurrent** instruction is provided below.

```

concurrent {
    match[var=var1](var1=0) {
        specific operation one
    }
    match[var=var2](var2=1) {
        specific operation two
    }
}

```

The above **concurrent** instruction contains two **match** instructions. The first **match** instruction instructs the processor PP1 to determine if a variable var1 equals zero, and the second **match** instruction instructs the processor PP1 to determine if a variable var2 equals one. If the processor PP1 determines that the variable var1 equals zero, it no longer evaluates the relevant data to determine if the variable var2 equals one and performs the “*specific operation one*”. On the other hand, if the processor PP1 determines that the variable var2 equals one, it no longer evaluates the relevant data to determine if the variable var1 equals zero and performs the “*specific operation two*”.

The **otherwise** instruction is used in conjunction with a **concurrent** instruction or a **match** instruction. When the **otherwise** instruction is used in conjunction with a **concurrent** instruction, it defines an operation that is to be performed if all of the sub-instructions contained in the **concurrent** instruction fail. Similarly, when the **otherwise** instruction is used in conjunction with a **match** instruction, it defines an operation to be performed if the **match** instruction fails. An example of an **otherwise** instruction that is used in conjunction with a **concurrent** instruction is shown below.

```

concurrent {
    match[var=var1](var1=0) {
        specific operation one
    }
}

```

```

5      match[var=var2](var1=1) {
        specific operation two
      }

      otherwise {
        specific operation three
      }
    }

```

10

As illustrated above, if the two **match** instructions contained in the **concurrent** instruction fail, the packet processor PP1 performs the “*specific operation three*” defined by the **otherwise** instruction. In a further example, the **otherwise** instruction may be executed if neither of the two **match** instructions is satisfied within a predetermined period of time. Such predetermined period of time may be predefined by the software language. On the other hand, the period of time may be defined by the programmer and may be incorporated into the **otherwise** instruction as a modifier or a constraint.

15

Depending on the manner in which the **match** instruction, the immediate modifier, and the **otherwise** instruction are used in conjunction with each other, several types of matching scenarios may be created. For example, one scenario may utilize the following set of instructions:

20

```

25      match[var=var1, immediate=on](var1=1) {
        specific operation one
      }

      otherwise {
        specific operation two
      }

```

30

In the set of instructions above, the **match** instruction performs a matching operation based on the variable var1, and the immediate modifier instructs the **match** instruction to

determine if the variable var1 equals one for only the current datagram and not for the subsequent datagrams. If the variable var1 equals one within the current datagram, the packet processor PP1 performs the “*specific operation one*”. If the variable var1 does not equal one within the current datagram, the **otherwise** instruction instructs the packet processor to perform the “*specific operation two*”.

In another scenario, the following set of instructions is utilized:

```
match[var=var1](var1=1) {  
  specific operation one  
}
```

```
otherwise {  
  specific operation two  
}
```

In the set of instructions above, the **match** instruction performs a matching operation based on the variable var1, and since there is no immediate modifier, the **match** instruction to determine if the variable var1 equals one for all of the datagrams within a related set of process flows. If a variable var1 is detected within the process flows and equals one, the “*specific operation one*” is performed. On the other hand, if the related set of process flows terminates before a variable var1 that equals one is detected, the packet processor PP1 performs the “*specific operation two*”. Also, in the above instruction set, the same result would occur if the **match** instruction contained an immediate modifier that equaled “off”.

In yet another scenario, the following set of instructions is utilized:

```
match[var=var1](var1=1) {  
  specific operation one  
}
```

In the set of instructions above, the **match** instruction performs a matching operation based on the variable var1, and since there is no **otherwise** instruction, the **match** instruction will determine if the variable var1 equals one for all of the datagrams across sequential sets of process flows. In other words, the **match** instruction will continue to analyze the variable var1 in a first set of process flows. After the last process flow in the first set terminates, the **match** instruction will continue to search for the variable var1 in a second set of process flows which originates after the first set of process flows terminates. If the variable var1 is detected within any of the sets of process flows and equals one, the “*specific operation one*” is performed.

A **success** instruction and a **fail** instruction can also be used to define an event. Specifically, the **success** instruction informs a packet processor (e.g. the processor PP1) that the event containing the **success** instruction has been successfully completed or has occurred. Conversely, a **fail** instruction is used to inform the processor PP1 that the event containing the **fail** instruction has not been successfully completed or has not occurred. When the **success** or **fail** instruction is executed, the current event is immediately exited. An example of the use of the **success** and **fail** instructions is provided below.

```

20      Event First_Event ( ) {
           concurrent {
               match[var=var1](var1=0) {
25                 success ( )
               }
               match[var=var2](var2=1) {
30                 fail ( )
               }
           }

```

}

}

In the **event** First_Event, the packet processor PP1 simultaneously determines if a variable var1 equals zero and if the variable var2 equals one. If the processor PP1
5 determines that the variable var1 equals zero, the **success** instruction is executed, and the **event** First_Event is deemed to have occurred. On the other hand, if the processor PP1 determines that the variable var2 equals one, the **fail** instruction is executed, and the **event** First_Event is deemed to have not occurred. In order to inform the processor PP1 that the **event** First_Event has occurred or has not occurred, the **success** and **fail**
10 instructions may set a flag to an appropriate value at a certain memory location of memory associated with the processor PP1.

In order to better explain the programming language of the present embodiment, a simplified user logon procedure event will be described in conjunction with the state machine diagram shown in Fig. 6. As shown in the figure, the network system waits in
15 the No User ID state 600 until a source computer (e.g. a server) sends a logon prompt to a destination computer (e.g. a personal computer operated by an end user). In the present example, the logon prompt is a file transfer protocol ("FTP") command that contains a logon prompt (e.g. "USER"). When the server sends the prompt USER, the system moves to the User ID state 610. In response to the logon prompt, the end user inputs a user
20 identification via, for example, a personal computer, a terminal, or other appropriate input device, and the user identification is transmitted to the server.

In the User ID state 610, the server waits to receive the user identification, and when the user identification is received, the server evaluates the user identification to determine whether or not the user can logon to the server. Specifically, based on the user
25 identification, the server may determine (1) that the user may logon to the server without

a password, (2) that the user may not logon to the server, or (3) that the user may only logon to the server if the user provides a valid password.

If the user may logon to the server without a password, the server generates a successful logon FTP response code 230 and outputs the response code 230 to, for example, the personal computer of the user. In such case, the logon event is successful, and the system moves to the successful logon state 620.

If the user may not logon to the server, the server generates a failed logon FTP response code 530 and outputs the response code 530 to, for example, the personal computer of the user. In such case, the logon event has failed, and the system moves to the failed logon state 630.

If the user may logon to the server only if the user provides a valid password, the server generates a password request FTP response code 331 and supplies the response code 331 to, for example, the personal computer of the user, in the Need Password state 640. Furthermore, the server generates a password prompt (e.g. "PASS") and transmits the password prompt to, for example, the personal computer. After transmitting the password prompt, the system moves to the Password state 650 and waits for the personal computer of the user to forward a password to the server. A password may also be provided manually by the user through an input device connected, for example, to the personal computer.

When the user inputs a password to the personal computer, or the personal computer responds with a password, the server receives the password and determines if the password is valid or invalid. If the password is valid, the server generates the successful logon FTP response code 230 and outputs the response code 230 to, for example, the personal computer. In such case, the logon event is successful, and the system moves to the successful logon state 620. On the other hand, if the password is

invalid, the server generates the failed logon FTP response code 530 and outputs the response code 530 to, for example, the personal computer. In such case, the logon event has failed, and the system moves to the failed logon state 630.

With the software programming language of the present embodiment, the packet processor PP1 can be easily programmed to determine whether or not the above user logon event was attempted and whether or not the logon event was successful or unsuccessful. An example of a software program that is generated via the programming language and that instructs the processor PP1 to identify the logon event is illustrated in Fig. 7. Also, a flow chart that graphically illustrates the routine performed by the software program is shown in Fig. 8. In the description below, the references to various line numbers correspond to the line numbers of the software program shown in Fig. 7, and the references to various operations correspond to the operations in the flow chart shown in Fig. 8.

In the present example, the CCU 205 shown in Fig. 2 captures data packets transmitted upstream and downstream between the server and the personal computer of the end user and forwards relevant data packets to the packet processor PP1. The packet processor PP1 executes the software program shown in Fig. 7 for monitoring the bi-directional traffic between the personal computer and the server. Even though the present example uses a personal computer as a node of the network, other user terminals, which are not personal computers, can clearly be used. Furthermore, multiple personal computers, user terminals, or other nodal devices can be employed.

In any event, as described above, when the user initially attempts to logon to the server, the server outputs an FTP command containing the logon prompt USER.

Accordingly, the packet processor PP1 waits until an FTP command sending the prompt USER is transmitted from the server to personal computer (line 702) (operation 800).

Specifically, in line 702 of the software program, the **match** instruction instructs the processor PP1 to examine whether or not the variable FTP_Cmd exists in the information transmitted between the server and the personal computer. In this example, the variable FTP_Cmd has been defined as the FTP command, and thus, the **match** instruction in line 5 702 instructs the packet processor PP1 to determine if an FTP command is detected. In addition, the **match** instruction has a constraint that instructs the processor PP1 to determine if the FTP command equals the user logon prompt USER. In this example, the term "USER" has been previously defined as a particular constant corresponding to the user login request code. Therefore, the term "USER" does not need to be set equal to any 10 particular value in the constraint because the term itself represents a particular constant. In the present non-limiting example, the prompt USER is a system prompt that prompts the user to input a user identification.

After the personal computer receives the logon prompt USER and the personal computer of the end user displays a corresponding prompt, the user inputs a user 15 identification. The user identification is transmitted to the server, and the server responds by transmitting one of three possible responses to the computer. In particular, if the user identification indicates that the end user can logon to the server without a password, the server allows the end user to logon and transmits an FTP response containing the successful logon code 230. If the user identification indicates that the end user can logon 20 only if a valid password is provided, the server requests the end user to input a valid password by transmitting an FTP response containing the password request code 331. Finally, if the user identification indicates that the end user cannot logon to the server (with or without a password), the server does not allow the end user to logon and transmits an FTP response containing the failed logon code 530.

25 Thus, after the packet processor PP1 detects the FTP command containing the

logon prompt USER, it concurrently searches for the successful logon code 230, the password request code 331, and the failed logon code 530 transmitted in an FTP response from the server (lines 704, 706, 710, and 727) (operations 810, 830, and 880).

In particular, the **concurrent** instruction in line 704 instructs the packet processor

5 PP1 to concurrently execute the **match** instructions in lines 706, 710, and 727 until one of the **match** instructions is satisfied. The **match** instruction in line 706 instructs the processor PP1 to determine whether or not the variable FTP_Resp exists in the information transmitted between the personal computer and the server. In this example, the variable FTP_Resp has been defined as an FTP response, and thus, the **match**

10 instruction in line 706 instructs the packet processor PP1 to determine if an FTP response is detected. In addition, the **match** instruction has a constraint that instructs the processor PP1 to determine if a variable Code equaling 230 exists within the FTP response. In this example, the variable Code is previously defined as at least a portion of the FTP response that contains information responding to the user identification provided by the user.

15 Since the term “Code” is a variable and is not a constant (as in the case of the term “USER”), the constraint contained in the **match** instruction in line 706 sets the variable Code equal to the value 230. Since the value 230 corresponds to a successful logon response code, the **match** instruction in line 706 instructs the processor PP1 to determine if the server has transmitted an FTP response containing the successful logon response

20 code 230 in response to the user identification (operation 810). If the FTP response contains the code 230, the packet processor PP1 determines that the user has successfully logged on and that the **event** FTP_User_Connected has occurred (line 708) (operation 820).

While the **match** instruction in line 706 is being executed, the **match** instruction

25 in line 710 is examined against the data stream. Such **match** instruction instructs the

processor PP1 to examine the information contained in the FTP response and determine if such information equals the password request code 331 (line 710) (operation 830). In other words, the processor PP1 determines if the server requires the user of the personal computer to input a valid password before logging on.

5 If the FTP response contains the code 331, the processor PP1 executes the **match** instruction in line 712. Such **match** instruction instructs the processor PP1 to examine the information contained in the FTP commands transmitted from the server to the personal computer and to determine if such information equals the password prompt PASS (line 712)(operation 840). In other words, the processor PP1 determines if the
10 server has prompted the personal computer for a password.

 If an FTP command contains the password prompt PASS, the **concurrent** instruction in line 714 instructs the packet processor PP1 to concurrently execute the **match** instructions in lines 716 and 720 until one of the **match** instructions is satisfied (operations 850 and 860). The **match** instruction in line 716 instructs the processor PP1
15 to examine the information contained in the FTP responses transmitted from the server and determine if such information equals the successful logon response code 230 (operation 850). If the FTP response contains the code 230, the packet processor PP1 determines that the user has successfully logged on and that the **event** FTP_User_Connected has occurred (line 718) (operation 820).

20 While the **match** instruction in line 716 is being executed, the **match** instruction in line 720 instructs the processor PP1 to examine the information contained in the FTP responses and determine if such information equals the failed logon response code 530 (operation 860). If the FTP response contains the code 530, the packet processor PP1 determines that the logon attempt has failed and that the **event** FTP_User_Connected has
25 not occurred (line 722) (operation 870).

Similarly, while the **match** instruction in lines 706 and 710 are being executed, the **match** instruction in line 727 instructs the processor PP1 to examine the information contained in the FTP responses and determine if such information equals the failed logon response code 530 (operation 880). If the FTP response contains the code 530, the packet processor PP1 determines that the logon attempt has failed and that the **event** FTP_User_Connected has not occurred (line 729) (operation 870).

For the purpose of managing and monitoring the traffic on the network system, the NMC system 200 may not need to analyze every detail of the data communication between the personal computer of the end user and the server. For example, merely identifying the fact that the end user attempted to logon to the server and that the attempt was successful or unsuccessful may be sufficient. In such a scenario, a programmer does not need to define the **event** FTP_User_Connected in accordance with all of the detailed procedural paths used to establish whether or not an end user has successfully logged on to the server.

An example of a more simplified version of a software program that instructs the processor PP1 to identify the logon event is illustrated in Fig. 9. Also, a flow chart that graphically illustrates the routine performed by the software program is shown in Fig. 10. Again, in the description below, the references to various line numbers correspond to the line numbers of the software program shown in Fig. 9, and the references to the various operations correspond to the operations in the flow chart shown in Fig. 10.

As in the previous example, a logon attempt to the server begins with the server outputting an FTP command containing the logon prompt USER. Accordingly, the packet processor PP1 detects if an FTP command having the prompt USER is transmitted from the server to the personal computer (line 902) (operation 1000).

After the logon prompt USER is transmitted from the server to the personal

computer, the server eventually responds by transmitting one of two possible responses to the computer. Specifically, the server ultimately transmits an FTP response that either contains a successful logon code 230 or a failed logon code 530. Thus, after the packet processors PP1 detects the FTP command containing the prompt USER, it concurrently
5 searches for the successful logon code 230 or the failed logon code 530 transmitted in an FTP response from the server (lines 904, 906, and 910) (operations 1010 and 1030).

In particular, the **concurrent** instruction in line 904 instructs the packet processor PP1 to concurrently execute the **match** instructions in lines 906 and 910 until one of the **match** instructions is satisfied. The **match** instruction in line 906 instructs the processor
10 PP1 to examine the information contained in the FTP responses and determine if such information equals the successful logon response code 230 (operation 1010). If the FTP response contains the code 230, the packet processor PP1 determines that the user has successfully logged on and that the event `FTP_User_Connected` has occurred (line 908) (operation 1020).

Concurrently with the **match** instruction in line 906, the **match** instruction in line
15 910 is executed. Such **match** instruction instructs the processor PP1 to examine the information contained in the FTP response and determine if such information equals the failed logon response code 530 (operation 1030). If the FTP response contains the code 530, the packet processor PP1 determines that the logon attempt has failed and that the
20 **event** `FTP_User_Connected` has not occurred (line 912) (operation 1040).

As described above, both of the software programs shown in Figs. 7 and 9 monitor the same user logon event, which occurs in the application layer of the communication model. However, the program in Fig. 7 is designed to have the processor PP1 monitor more details regarding the logon event, whereas the program in Fig. 9 is designed to have
25 the processor PP1 determine whether or not the end user ultimately logged on to the

server. Accordingly, the software program language of the present embodiment enables a programmer to flexibly define events very specifically or very vaguely, depending on the desired operation of the NMC system 200.

Also, the logon procedures described above are much simpler than an actual logon procedure and have been simplified for the sake of brevity and clarity in explaining the above embodiments of the present invention. Since an actual logon procedure may be much more complex than the above-explained procedure, the advantages of the present invention are even more apparent when the present invention is used to monitor actual network events and occurrences.

In the above examples of the **match** instruction, the packet processor PP1 is instructed to search in a particular location (e.g. the FTP response) within a data flow and determine if the information contained in the FTP response equals a particular value (e.g. the code 230). However, the **match** instruction can be further defined so that the processor PP1 performs a more specific and specialized matching function. For example, the **match** instruction may be defined so that it instructs the packet processor PP1 to determine if a data stream contains very specific information. An example of such a **match** instruction is provided below.

```
match [var=HTTPrequest](uri="/index.htm", httpVer="1.1", method.get)
```

The terms "HTTPrequest," "uri," and "httpVer" may be variables that are previously defined by the programmer in another portion of the software language. Alternatively, the variables may correspond to predetermined variables that are already understood by the software language and do not have to be defined by the programmer. In any event, in the present example, the variable HTTPrequest corresponds to known format of the

header of a request command in a hyper-text transfer protocol ("HTTP") standard. The variable "uri" corresponds to a universal resource indicator contained in the request command, and the variable "httpVer" corresponds to an HTTP version relating to the request command. Also, in the present example, the term "method.get" is an HTTP method that performs a get request and is previously defined. In particular, the HTTP standard includes many predefined methods, and one of the methods is a get method and is identified in the standard by the term "method.get".

Accordingly, in executing the above **match** instruction, the packet processor PP1 will determine that the **match** instruction is satisfied if an HTTP message is transmitted over the network and has a header that indicates (1) that the message is within a "method.get" request, (2) that the "method.get" request is for a universal resource indicator ("uri") corresponding to the index.htm resource (i.e. uri="/index.htm"), and (3) that the message is involved in an HTTP version 1.1 transaction (i.e. httpVer="1.1"). By enabling the programmer to impose multiple constraints for the matching function, the **match** instruction significantly simplifies the ability to program complex matching sequences. Furthermore, such ability enables the programmer to impose content restrictions as well as structural restrictions in a matching operation.

In another implementation, the software language of the present embodiment is capable of imposing a constraint on a variable. A non-limiting example of a program that imposes such a constraint is illustrated in Fig. 14.

As shown in lines 1400-1404 of the figure, a variable type is defined as a sequence of two integers. An example of the general format for defining a variable type is as follows:

```
<variable type name> ::= <variable type>
{
```

<content of variable type>
}

Accordingly, in line 1400, the variable type is a “sequence” variable type and is
5 designated with the name “anADTType”. Also, in lines 1402 and 1403, the variable type
contains two integers f1 and f2. Thus, anADTType variable type is a sequence of two
integers f1 and f2.

A more detailed description of an example of the “sequence” variable type, as
well as other variable types, is contained in U.S. Application No. 09/717,295 (“the ‘295
10 application”). The ‘295 application is entitled “A Structured and Hierarchical Method for
Representation and Parsing of Textual Patterns”. Also, the ‘295 application was filed on
November 22, 2000, invented by Oren Ravoy and Doron Shamia, and assigned to the
assignee of the present application. The ‘295 application is incorporated herein by
reference for all purposes.

15 In lines 1414-1422 of the program, an event A2() is defined. In the event A2(),
a variable “aLocalVar” is defined as anADTType variable type (line 1416). In the
present example, the basic format of defining a variable as a particular type is as follows:

<variable type name> <variable name>

20

After the variable “aLocalVar” has been defined, the event A2() defines an alias name
“anAlias” based on the variable “aLocalVar”. Specifically, in line 1417, the alias
instruction assigns the alias name “anAlias” to a subfield of the variable “aLocalVar”.

An illustrative example of the format of an alias instruction that assigns the subfield of a
25 variable an alias name is as follows:

alias <alias name> = < variable name>.<subfield>

Thus, in line 1417, the **alias** instruction assigns the integer f1 of the variable “aLocalVar” with the alias “anAlias”. In other words, the alias “anAlias” is considered a variable that is equal to the integer f1 of the variable “aLocalVar” and can be used by other events

5 besides the **event** A2().

Lines 1406-1412 of the program in Fig. 14 define an **event** A1(). In line 1408 of the **event** A1(), a **match** instruction determines if the **event** A2() has occurred.

Furthermore, the parenthetical term of the **match** instruction contains a constraint on the matching operation. Specifically, the parenthetical term requires the alias “anAlias” in
10 **event** A2() to equal two (i.e. requires the integer f1 of the variable “aLocalVar” to equal two). In other words, the **match** instruction in line 1408 requires (1) the **event** A2() to have occurred and (2) the integer f1 of the variable “aLocalVar” in the **event** A2() to equal two. Thus, as described above, the **match** instruction in line 1408 places a constraint on the value of the variable “aLocalVar” defined in the **event** A2().

15 In addition to imposing a constraint on a variable by referring to an alias, the use of an alias is not required. For example, a constraint can be imposed on a variable by identifying the actual variable and the constraint in a parenthetical term of a **match** instruction or an **event** instruction. Also, besides constraining a variable to equal a particular value, the variable may be constrained to not equal a certain value, to fall
20 within a range of values, or to not fall within a range of values.

One of the advantages of the software language of the present embodiment is that it enables a programmer to define **events** based on instructions that analyze messages in any one of the several communication layers illustrated in the standard communication model shown in Fig. 5. For example, Fig. 11 illustrates an example in which a **match**
25 instruction analyzes data that is transmitted over the network in the IP layer of the

communication model.

As shown in the figure, the **event** QoSValue() is defined to occur when data transmitted in the IP layer equals a particular value. Specifically, in the square-bracketed term, the var modifier indicates that the **match** instruction should perform a matching operation based on the variable IPHeader. The variable IPHeader may be previously defined by the programmer or may be a predefined variable within the software language that identifies the IP header within a message or datagram. In addition, the at modifier is set equal to the keyword “ip”. Thus, the at modifier instructs the processor PP1 to evaluate data located with the Internet protocol (“IP”) layer of the communication model. Also, the immediate modifier is set equal to “off”, and thus, the packet processor PP1 evaluates the data contained within the IP header for each message or data packet until the **match** instruction is satisfied.

Furthermore, the parenthetical term instructs the processor PP1 to determine if a sub-field at the location defined by the square-bracketed term equals a particular value. Specifically, the parenthetical term instructs the processor PP1 to determine if the TOS variable equals the value HIGH. In this example, the TOS variable has been previously defined and corresponds to the type of service (“TOS”) bit contained in a sub-field of the IP header. Also, the value “HIGH” is a constant (e.g. “1”) that is previously defined elsewhere in the software program.

Accordingly, the **match** instruction instructs the processor PP1 to evaluate the TOS bit sub-field contained in the IP header of sequential messages or data packets until the value of a TOS bit sub-field equals the constant “1”. When the value in one of the TOS bit sub-fields equals the constant “1”, the processor PP1 determines that the **event** QoSValue1() is successful and has occurred.

Fig. 12 illustrates the software routine that defines an **event** QoSValue2()

similarly to the manner in which the **event** QoSValue1() shown in Fig. 11 is defined.

However, in the **event** QoSValue2, the immediate modifier within the **match** instruction is set equal to “on”, and an **otherwise** instruction is used in conjunction with the **match** instruction.

5 Since the immediate modifier is set equal to “on”, the **match** instruction instructs the packet processor PP1 to only evaluate the TOS bit sub-field contained in the IP header of the first datagram that it receives and that contains the IP header. If the value of the TOS sub-field equals the constant “1”, the processor PP1 executes the **success**() instruction and determines that the **event** QoSValue2() has occurred. If the value of the
10 TOS sub-field in the first datagram does not equal “1”, the **otherwise** instruction is executed. In such case, the packet processor PP1 executes the **fail**() instruction and determines that the **event** QoSValue2() has not occurred and has failed.

Fig. 13 illustrates an example in which a **match** instruction analyzes data that is transmitted over the network in the transport communication protocol (“TCP”) layer of
15 the communication model. Specifically, as shown in the figure, the **event** UrgentSegment() is defined to occur when data transmitted in the TCP layer equals a particular value. Specifically, in the square-bracketed term, the var modifier instructs the packet processor PP1 to evaluate data contained at a location defined by the variable TCPheader. The variable TCPheader may be previously defined by the programmer or
20 may be a predefined variable within the software language that identifies the TCP header within a message or data packet in the data stream. In addition, as described above, since the at modifier is set equal to the keyword “transport”, the at modifier instructs the processor PP1 to evaluate data located in the fourth layer (i.e. the transport layer) of the communication model. Also, the immediate modifier is set equal to “off”, and thus, the
25 packet processor PP1 evaluates the data contained at a particular location within the TCP

header of sequential messages or data packets until the **match** instruction is satisfied.

Furthermore, parenthetical term instructs the processor PP1 to determine if a sub-field at the location defined by the square-bracketed term equals a particular value.

Specifically, the parenthetical term instructs the processor PP1 to determine if the

5 DPORT sub-field within the TCP header has a value that equals the value “21”.

Accordingly, the **match** instruction instructs the processor PP1 to evaluate the DPORT sub-field contained in the TCP header of sequential messages or data packet to determine if the value of the DPORT sub-field equals the value “21”. When the value in one of the DPORT sub-fields equals the value “21”, the processor PP1 determines that the

10 **event UrgentSegment()** is successful and has occurred.

Another instruction that can be implemented by the software program of the present embodiment is the **SANTimer_t** instruction. The **SANTimer_t** instruction defines a timer that can be used to time various events or occurrences being monitored by the processor PP1. An example of the general format of such instruction is shown below:

15

SANTimer_t <timer name>

Thus, in order to define a timer with the name “myTimer”, the following instruction would be created:

20

SANTimer_t myTimer

A timer that is defined by the **SANTimer_t** instruction will count until a boundary is reached, and afterwards, the timer will stop and generate a flag indicating that the

25 boundary has been reached. Once a timer is defined, a **set()** command can be used to

assign various properties to the timer. In one implementation, the various properties assigned to the timer instruct the timer to count in a particular manner. Examples of such properties are the value property, the direction property, the resolution property, and the bound property.

5 The value property contains the initial value of the timer, and the direction property indicates the direction in which the counter will count. For example, the counter can count by incrementing its value (i.e. count up) or by decrementing its value (i.e. count down). Also, the resolution property indicates the unit of time that will be used to increment or decrement the count value. For instance, the resolution property may
10 indicate that the count value is incremented or decremented every second, every millisecond, etc. Finally, the bound property is used to define the upper or lower boundary for the count value. In other words, the value property identifies the starting value of the timer and the bound property identifies the ending value of timer. Thus, the timer counts from the value defined in the value property to the value defined in the
15 bound property. In addition, if the boundary property is set equal to the value “-1”, the timer continually increments (or decrements) the count value, and an upper (or lower) boundary is not set. In other words, the timer counts endlessly until it is instructed to stop counting from a separate command.

 An example of the basic format of a set command that is used to assign various
20 properties to a timer is as follows:

```
          <timer name>.set(value=<value property value>, direction=<direction property  
                            value>, resolution=<resolution property value>, bound=<bound  
                            property value>)
```

25

In the following specific example, the set command assigns properties to the timer

“myTimer” to instruct it to count down from an initial value of ten to a final value of zero and to decrement its count every millisecond:

```
myTimer.set(value=10, direction=down, resolution=mili, bound=0)
```

5

Once a timer is defined and assigned various properties, other commands may be utilized to control the timer. Examples of other command include (but are not limited to) the start() command, the pause() command, the resume() command, the stop() command, and the timeout() command.

10

The start command() instructs the timer to start counting, and the pause() command instructs the timer to temporally stop counting. The resume() command is issued after the pause() command and instructs the timer to resume counting from the value contained in the timer when the pause() command was issued. The stop() command instructs the timer to stop counting. Furthermore, after the stop() command, the timer may reset its count value to the initial value defined by the value property discussed above. Finally, the timeout() command is used when a certain code has to be executed upon successful termination (or timeout) of a timer operation.

15

Examples of the generic formats of the various commands above are shown below:

20

```
<timer name>.start( )
```

```
<timer name>.pause( )
```

```
<timer name>.resume( )
```

```
<timer name>.stop( )
```

25

```
<timer name>.timeout( )
```


5 A specific example using some of the above properties and commands is shown in
Fig. 15. As shown in the figure, the **SANTimer_t** instruction defines a timer with the
name “myTimer” (line 1500). Also, in line 1502, the **set()** command assigns properties
to the timer “myTimer” to instruct it to count down from an initial value of ten to a final
value of zero and to decrement its count every millisecond. In line 1504, the **start()**
command instructs the timer “myTimer” to begin counting down from ten, and before the
timer “myTimer” reaches zero, the **timeout()** command in line 1511 is “false”. When the
timeout() command is false, the “*specific operation*” at lines 1512-1514 is not executed.
10 However, after the timer “myTimer” reaches zero, the **timeout()** command is “true”, and
the “*specific operation*” at lines 1512-1514 is executed.

Of course the specific properties, property values, and commands described above
are merely examples of many possible properties, values, and commands that can be
implemented in the present invention. Moreover, upon reading the present specification,
15 one skilled in the art clearly would understand the many other properties, values, and
commands that may be used.

In addition to counting time via the **SANTimer_t** instruction, the **SANMeter_t**
instruction can be implemented by the software program of the present embodiment to
count or measure quantities besides time. For example, the **SANMeter_t** instruction
20 defines a meter to measure quantities such as bytes, packets, or events. An example of
the general format of such instruction is shown below:

SANMeter_t <meter name>

25 Thus, in order to define a meter with the name “myMeter”, the following instruction

would be created:

SANMeter_t myMeter

5 As in the case of a timer, a meter that is defined by the **SANMeter_t** instruction will count until a boundary is reached, and afterwards, the meter will stop and generate a flag indicating that the boundary has been reached. Once a meter is defined, the **set()** command can be used to assign various properties to the meter. In one implementation, the various properties assigned to the meter instruct the meter to count in a particular
10 manner. Examples of such properties are the metric property, the flowUN property, and the bound property.

The metric property defines the types of quantities to be measured or counted. Examples of such quantities include (but are not limited to) bytes, datagrams, and events. The flowUN property identifies united process flows and instructs the meter to measure
15 quantities contained in all of the united process flows. In one example, data or information belonging to process flows that are related to each other or united with each other contain a “unite number” or a “flow index number” (“FIN”) to inform the packet processors PP1 to PPN of such fact. For example, united or related process flows belonging to a first group may contain the unite number “1”, and united or related process
20 flows belonging to a second group may contain the unite number “2”. Thus, if the flowUN property contains the property value “1”, the meter may measure the quantities contained in the first group of process flows. On the other hand, if the flowUN property contains the property value “2”, the meter may measure the quantities contained in the second group of process flows. In addition, if the flowUN property contains the property
25 value “-1”, the meter may measure all process flows, regardless whether or not any of the

process flows are united or related.

A more detailed description of an illustrative, non-limiting manner of generating a “unite number”, which may also be referenced as “merge number” or a “flow index number” (“FIN”), is contained in U.S. Application No. 09/715,152 (“the ‘152 application”). The ‘152 application is entitled “An Apparatus and Method for Bundling Associated Network Process Flows in Service Aware Networks”. Also, the ‘152 application was filed on November 20, 2000, invented by Michael Ben-Nun, Sagi Ravid, Offer Weil, Rony Gotesdyner, and Oren Ravoy, and assigned to the assignee of the present application. The ‘152 application is incorporated herein by reference for all purposes.

Finally, the bound property is used to control a meter in a manner that is similar to manner in which it is used to control a timer.

In one implementation, a set command is used to assign various properties to a meter in a manner that is similar to the way in which a set command is used to assign properties to a timer. An example of the format of such a set command is shown below:

```
<meter name>.set(metric=<metric property value>, flowUN=<flowUN property value>, bound=<bound property value>)
```

In the following specific example, the set command assigns properties to the meter “myMeter” to instruct it to count the number of bytes in all process flows until the count value equals 1000:

```
myMeter.set(metric=bytes, flowUN=-1, bound=1000)
```

Once a meter is defined and assigned various properties, other commands may be

utilized to control the timer. Examples of other commands include (but are not limited to) the start() command, the pause() command, the resume() command, the stop() command, and the timeout() command. The formats and operations of such commands are analogous to the formats and operations described above in conjunction with timers.

5 A specific example using some of the above properties and commands is shown in Fig. 16. As shown in the figure, the SANMeter_t instruction defines a meter with the name “myMeter” (line 1600). Also, in line 1602, the set() command assigns properties to the meter “myMeter” to instruct it to count the number of bytes in all process flows until 1000 bytes are counted. In line 1604, the start() command instructs the meter
10 “myMeter” to begin counting. After the meter begins counting, the match instruction instructs the processor PP1 to perform a certain matching operation (line 1606). Furthermore, the dir modifier in the **match** instruction restricts the matching operation to be performed in only the flow of packets moving from a source computer to the destination computer. In addition, in line 1611, the pause () command instructs the meter
15 myMeter to pause counting the number of bytes, and an if instruction determines if the counted value (i.e. myMeter.value) of the meter is greater than 100. If the counted value is greater than 100, a “specific operation” is performed (lines 1614-1616). Afterwards, the myMeter.resume() command instructs the meter resume counting the bytes.

Of course the specific properties, property values, and commands described above
20 are merely examples of many possible properties, values, and commands that can be implemented in the present invention. Moreover, upon reading the present specification, one skilled in the art clearly would understand the many other properties, values, and commands that may be used.

Another example of the flexibility of software program of the present embodiment
25 is shown in Fig. 17. In this example, a hierarchy of events are used to examine data

packets to determine whether or not a high quality of service is requested and to determine the amount of jitter experienced in the communication network. Also, the value of the type of service ("TOS") bit is assumed to indicate whether or not a high quality of service is requested and a real time protocol ("RTP") is assumed to be used. In addition, the amount of jitter in the network is defined as the statistical variance of the RTP data packet inter-arrival time (i.e. the time required for a data packet to travel from its source to its destination). When such time exceeds a certain value or threshold, the amount of jitter is relatively large and certain measures must be taken to ensure a reasonable quality of service. One measure that can be taken to ensure a reasonable quality of service is to increase the available bandwidth for the packet stream to reduce the jitter in the system. Although the program in Fig. 17 is created based on a hierarchy of events to perform the functions above, the software program of the present embodiment is not required to be created in such fashion. For example, upon reading the present application, one skilled in the art would know how to create the program entirely via sequential instructions.

Nonetheless, turning to Fig. 17, the illustrative, non-limiting routine comprises three events. The first event is the **event** QoSHigh() (lines 1700-1705) and determines whether a high quality of service is requested. The second event is the **event** HighJitter() (lines 1707-1733) and determines if the amount of jitter in the RTP layer of the communication model (i.e. the seventh layer) exceeds a predetermined threshold. Finally, the third event is the **event** IncreaseBandwidth() (lines 1735-1744) and determines whether or not the available bandwidth for the packet stream needs to be increased to reduce the jitter in the system.

In the **event** QoSHigh(), a **match** instruction performs a matching operation based on the variable IPHeader (line 1702). In the present example, the variable

IPHeader has been previously defined to identify the IP header within a datagram. In addition, the at modifier is set equal to the keyword "ip". Thus, the at modifier instructs the processor PP1 to evaluate data located within the IP layer of the communication model. Also, the constraint in parenthetical term of the **match** instruction instructs the processor PP1 to determine if the TOS variable equals the value QOS_HIGH. In this example, the TOS variable has been previously defined and corresponds to the type of service ("TOS") bit contained in a sub-field of the IP header. Also, the value "QOS_HIGH" is a constant (e.g. "1") that is previously defined elsewhere in the software program.

Accordingly, the **match** instruction instructs the processor PP1 to evaluate the TOS bit sub-field contained in the IP header of sequential messages or data packets until the value of a TOS bit sub-field equals the constant "1". When the value in one of the TOS bit sub-field equals the constant "1", the processor PP1 determines that the **event** QoSHigh() is successful and has occurred (line 1704).

In the **event** HighJitter(), the amount of jitter in the network is measured in the RTP level of the communication model. In this event, a timer "jitterTimer" is defined (line 1709), and a set command defines the various properties of the timer (line 1710). In line 1711 of the **event** HighJitter(), the term "int32" indicates that one or more variables are being defined. The "int" portion of the term indicates that the variables are integers, and the "32" portion of the term indicates that the variables are 32-bit integers. In the specific example, the term "int32" indicates that the terms "transit," "tmp," "delta", and "jitter" are 32-bit integer variables. Similarly, in line 1712, the term "const int32" indicates that a constant is being defined. The "const" portion of the term indicates a constant is being defined, and the "int32" portion of the term indicates that the constant is a 32-bit integer. In the specific example, the term "const int32" indicates that the term

JITTER_THRESHOLD is an 32-bit integer constant having a value that equals seventeen. After the constant and the variables are defined, the variables “transit” and “jitter” are set equal to zero (line 1713), and a start command instructs the timer “jitterTimer” to start counting (line 1714).

5 The software program of the present embodiment may also utilize familiar programming elements or instructions that are similar to those used in programming languages such as C, C++, and Java. Examples of such programming elements or instructions include “while,” “if,” “else,” etc. Upon reading the present application, one skilled in the art will easily understand how to incorporate and use such programming
10 elements or instructions and other elements or instructions into the software program of the present invention.

 In the non-limiting example shown in Fig. 17, the event HighJitter() employs a “while” instruction (line 1715) to create a “while loop” (lines 1715-1732) that continues until the **success()** instruction (line 1729) is executed and interrupts the continuous
15 execution of the loop. As described below, the execution of the **success()** instruction, indicates that the jitter in the system exceeds a threshold value.

 The while loop includes a **match** instruction (line 1717) that determines whether or not the variable RTPHeader is detected. The variable RTPHeader is defined elsewhere in the software program and corresponds to the RTP header in a datagram contained in
20 the application layer (i.e. the seventh layer) of the communication model. Furthermore, subfields have been previously defined for the variable RTPHeader, and one of the subfields is the subfield timeStamp. In the present example, the subfield timeStamp is defined to be the subfield within the RTP header that contains the system time indicating when the data contained in the RTP header was transmitted from the source computer.

25 When the variable RTPHeader is detected by the **match** instruction, the value of

the subfield timeStamp within the variable RTPHeader is determined (i.e. the value RTPHeader.timeStamp is determined). Then, in line 1719, the variable tmp is set equal to the difference between the current value of the timer jitterTimer (i.e. jitterTimer.value) and the value of the subfield timeStamp (i.e. RTPHeader.timeStamp). Accordingly, the

5 variable tmp indicates the difference between the current value of the timer jitterTimer and the time at which the RTP header was transmitted from the source. In other words, the variable tmp indicates the approximate amount of time that was required for the RTP header to travel from the source to the packet processor PP1.

Afterwards, the variable delta is determined by subtracting the variable tmp from

10 the variable transit (line 1720). As noted above, the variable transit initially is set equal to zero (line 1713) before the “while loop” is entered. Furthermore, the variable transit is set equal to the variable tmp within the “while loop” after the variable delta is calculated (line 1721). Thus, the variable delta indicates the approximate difference between the system time and the time at which RTP headers are transmitted from the source.

15 In certain situations, the variable delta may have a negative value, and an if instruction is used to determine if the variable has a negative value (line 1722). If the variable delta has a negative value, the variable delta is set equal to the complement of itself to ensure that it has a positive value (line 1724).

In any event, a value for the variable jitter is determined based on an equation for

20 calculating jitter (line 1726). Specifically, the value “8” is added to the variable jitter. Also, the term “>> 4” is a right shift operator that shifts the value of the term “(jitter + 8)” by four bit positions. Thus, term “>> 4” is equivalent to dividing the term “(jitter + 8)” by eight. Once the term “((jitter + 8) >> 4)” is determined, it is subtracted from the value of the variable delta, and the result is stored as the new value of the variable jitter. After

25 the value of the variable jitter is calculated, an if instruction is executed to determine if

the variable jitter exceeds the threshold constant JITTER_THRESHOLD (line 1727). If the variable exceeds the threshold constant, the **event** HighJitter() is deemed to have occurred (i.e. the program determines that a large amount of jitter exists in the system). In such case, the “while loop” is exited and the **event** HighJitter() is completed (line 5 1729). On the other hand, if the variable is less than the threshold constant, the program determines that an excessive amount of jitter is not contained in the network, and the “while loop” is repeated.

The **event** IncreaseBandwidth() is created based on the **event** HighJitter() and the **event** QoSHIGH(). Specifically, in the **event** IncreaseBandwidth, a **match** 10 instruction determines if the **event** HighJitter() has occurred (line 1737). If the **event** HighJitter() has occurred, another **match** instruction is executed to determine if the **event** QoSHigh() has occurred (line 1739). If both events have occurred, then a routine (not shown) to increase the bandwidth is executed. If the software program is being executed by a monitoring system, a routine (not shown) to generate a notification to increase 15 bandwidth is executed when both events have occurred.

Another aspect of the software program of the illustrative, non-limiting embodiment is the capability of informing the system to expect a new, additional process flow that is to be considered part of an existing process flow bundle. To inform the system of the new process flow, the software program utilizes the **mergeFlow** instruction. 20 Such instruction may be implemented in hardware, software, or combination of hardware and software.

An example of the basic format of the **mergeFlow** instruction is shown below:

mergeFlow(<flow index number>)

The flow index number ("FIN") corresponds to reference data that is contained in a particular process flow and uniquely identifies the process flow. As mentioned above, an illustrative example of determining an FIN is described in the '152 application. Also, instead of including an FIN in the parenthetical term above, a variable, which is

5 previously defined and which identifies a particular process flow, may be included.

Furthermore, instead of determining the value of an FIN, the parenthetical term above may include other data that uniquely identifies the process flow. For example, the header HDR shown in Fig. 1 uniquely identifies a process flow, and the parenthetical term may include data corresponding to the values in the header HDR. In addition, the difference

10 between uniting and relating process flows for the purpose of merging process flows is explained in the '152 application.

A non-limiting example of a program that employs the **mergeFlow** instruction is shown in Fig. 18. Such example examines process flows that are generated in accordance with a file transfer protocol ("FTP") transaction. Specifically, in an FTP transaction, a

15 first process flow is generated for commands and other control operations. Furthermore, the first process flow generates a second process flow (i.e. a child process flow) corresponding to the data that subsequently follows the commands or control operations in the first process flow.

In Fig. 18, the program detects the first process flow in the FTP transaction,

20 assigns the subsequent second process flow an FIN, and unites the second process flow with the first process flow. Furthermore, in the present example, the first process flow has previously been assigned an FIN that equals zero.

As shown in the figure, the program concurrently searches for a process flow having an FIN equaling zero (line 1802) and for a process flow having an FIN equaling

25 one (line 1810). In other words, the program concurrently searches for the first and

second process flows.

If the packet processor PP1 receives a process flow having an FIN that equals zero, the **match** instruction in line 1802 is satisfied, and the **match** instruction in line 1804 is subsequently executed. The **match** instruction in line 1804 determines if the variable FTPflow exists in the process flow. The variable FTPflow is previously defined to indicate whether or not a process flow is an FTP process flow. If the process flow is an FTP process flow, the **match** instruction is satisfied, and the **mergeFlow** instruction in line 1806 is executed.

As described above, when a first FTP process flow is received, a subsequent second process flow is generated that contains data corresponding to the commands, etc. contained in the first process flow. Thus, the **mergeFlow** instruction assigns the second process flow an FIN equaling one and unites the second process flow with the first process flow.

By enabling the system to prepare for the new second process flow via the **mergeFlow** instruction, it can accelerate its processing and allocate joint memory resources to the portions of the first and second process flows that are common to the process flows. Such operations utilize system resources more efficiently and enable the system to operate faster. Moreover, the **mergeFlow** instruction provides the second flow with an FIN that can subsequently be used as a reference to uniquely identify the second process flow.

After the **mergeFlow** instruction is executed, the software program will treat the first and second process flows as the same process flow and assign the same flow identification number ("flowID") to both process flows. Thus, when an instruction in the software program is directed to a process flow having such flowID, the system will apply the instruction to both the first and second process flows. However, a programmer can

create an instruction that applies to only the first process flow or the second process flow by referencing the FIN belonging to the first process flow (i.e. FIN = 0) or the FIN belonging to the second process flow (i.e. FIN = 1), instead of referencing the general flowID. For example, in Fig. 18, the **match** instruction in line 1802 is restricted to the flow having an FIN that equals zero, and thus, it is only applied to the first process flow. On the other hand, the **match** instruction in line 1810 is restricted to the flow having an FIN that equals one, and thus, it is only applied to the second process flow. Furthermore, the **match** instruction in line 1816 does not restrict the flow to any particular FIN, and thus, it is applied to both the first process flow and the second process flow.

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Sometimes, while an **event** instruction is being executed, the sequence of certain occurrences that are normally expected to occur do not occur. For instance, when a user attempts to logon to a server of a network, the server may send a USER prompt to the personal computer of the user. In such instance, a successful logon response, an unsuccessful logon response, or a password request response is expected to be subsequently transmitted from the server to the personal computer. However, one of the above responses may not actually be transmitted to the personal computer due to an error in the server or an error in the network. In such case, if a processor is executing the program shown in Fig. 7, the processor will continually execute the **match** instructions at lines 706, 710, and 727 ad infinitum. In other words, the processor will “lock up”.

In order to prevent such a situation from occurring, one implementation of the software program contains the **throw** instruction and the **resync** instruction. The **resync** instruction identifies a location in the software program to which the program is supposed to “jump” if the program locks up. Also, the **resync** instruction contains an exception

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name or names to distinguish it from any other **resync** instructions. An example of the basic format of the **resync** instruction is as follows:

resync on <exception name 1>, <exception name 2>, <etc.>

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The **throw** instruction is provided as an alternative to a certain portion of software code in the event that such portion of code “locks up”. The **throw** instruction contains an exception name, and when the software code locks up and the **throw** instruction is executed, and the program jumps to the **resync** instruction containing the same exception name contained in the **throw** instruction. An example of the basic format of the **throw** instruction is as follows:

throw <exception name>

15 An illustrative example of a software program containing the **resync** and **throw** instructions is shown in Fig. 19. As shown in the figure, the event **A()** executes a variety of instructions relating to the logon process. For example, in line 1904, the **match** instruction searches for a user logon request that is transmitted from a personal computer to a server. After such a command is transmitted, the **match** instruction in line 1906 searches for a password request transmitted from the server to the personal computer. If the password request is never transferred from the server to the personal computer due to some error, the **match** instruction is not executed, even after a predetermined length of time or after the relevant process flows are terminated. In such case, the **otherwise** instruction in line 1911 is executed.

25 The **throw** instruction in line 1914 is contained in the **otherwise** instruction and

identifies the exception name "anException". Accordingly, when the **throw** instruction is executed, the program jumps to the **resync** instruction containing the same exception name. In other words, the program jumps to the **resync** instruction contained in line 1902. From the **resync** instruction, the **event** A() executes the **match** instruction to again determine if a user logon request is transmitted from the personal computer to the server.

In the above example, the **throw** and **resync** instructions are contained in the same **event** A(). However, the present embodiment is not limited to such an arrangement. For example, a **throw** instruction contained in an **event** X() may jump to a **resync** instruction contained in an **event** Y(). Also, in the above example, the **throw** and **resync** instructions are used in the situation where the program "locks up". However, the use of such instructions is not limited to such a situation. For instance, they can be used in any instance where a program must jump from one portion of the code to another portion of the code.

The previous description of the preferred embodiments is provided to enable a person skilled in the art to make or use the present invention. Moreover, various modifications to these embodiments will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art, and the generic principles defined herein may be applied to other embodiments without the use of inventive faculty. Therefore, the present invention is not intended to be limited to the embodiments described herein but is to be accorded the widest scope as defined by the claims and equivalents thereof.